

56 COMMENTARY ON MACAULAY'S
HISTORY

fore, It is well to examine the authorities
Macaulay used
and consider how he employed them.

One can say this with perfect truth for
Macaulay : he
had a right to express himself with more
certainty than
previous historians because his narrative
rested on a greater
mass of evidence, a broader and more solid
basis, and
because he had taken more trouble than his
predecessors
to get at the truth. To say that he had
before him when
he wrote his account of James II twice as much
evidence as
Hunie had, would be understating the case ;
and besides,
the evidence Macaulay had before him was
not only much
greater in quantity but much better in quality,
much more
trustworthy. Part of it was entirely new
evidence, and had
not been accessible to previous historians. Of
this new
evidence some was brought to light by the
researches of
Macaulay himself, but he had the great
advantage of
finding much of the required new evidence
assembled
ready to his hand by the labours of other
people.

The standard historian of the reign of James
II, when
Macaulay wrote, was Hume, whose narrative
was a subtle
apology for the Stuarts, and stopped short at
the Revolution
of 1688. Since his time, two historians
had attempted
to turn the tables by telling the story of the
misrule of
James from a Whig point of view, and by

justifying the
Revolution which overthrew him. One was
Charles James
Fox, whose history of the reign of James II,
published
posthumously in 1808 by Lord Holland, was a
mere frag-
ment ending with the execution of Monmouth
in July 1685.
The other was Sir James Mackintosh, whose
History of the
Revolution in England in 1688 appeared in
1834. That,
too, was a fragment published a couple of
years after the
death of its author. Mackintosh had only
carried the
story down to June 1688 (the date of the birth
of the Prince